

Ohio Redistricting Commission Testimony — Legislative Maps
Desiree Tims, President and CEO, Innovation Ohio

Co-Chair Sykes, Co-Chair Cupp, and members of the redistricting commission. Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Desiree Tims. I'm a Dayton native and former candidate for Congress. Currently, I serve as president and CEO of Innovation Ohio.

Innovation Ohio is a member of the Equal Districts Coalition. We're a group of over 30 Ohio advocacy organizations and unions fighting for an open, transparent, and truly fair redistricting process.

One of the main goals of our coalition has been to include a wide range of racially, socio-economically, and geographically diverse communities in Ohio's redistricting process.

We were especially disturbed, therefore, to learn that the maps being proposed to the public clearly crack and pack Black and brown Ohioans into illogical districts, which dilutes their political power.

For example, the proposed Senate map draws Black communities in Greater Dayton and Trotwood into a district with rural voters in Preble, Drake, and Miami counties. These are different communities with different needs. It would make far more sense to connect these Black Dayton area voters with similar communities in Jefferson Township and members of their own county.

The population of Dayton is nearly 40% Black. The population of Montgomery County is over 20% Black, and often splits its votes evenly between Democratic and Republican statewide candidates. Yet the way the commission's proposed maps draw the districts, the Dayton area would be unlikely to elect any Democratic state senators. Frankly, it is difficult to believe this was an accident and without any intent or malice on the Republican party's part.

The Ohio Constitution clearly directs legislative map drawers to create maps that reflect voters' preferences over the past decade. This requirement is also known as representational fairness. This requirement upholds the very essence of a true democracy. It is obvious and troubling that the proposed maps ignore such an important constitutional requirement.

Over the past ten years on average, Republicans have only won about 55% of Ohio's vote. A constitutional map will not give Republicans more than 55% of government seats. It's that simple. Ohio's maps should reflect how Ohioans actually vote.

Our coalition has made clear that fair maps will not create fewer than 44 Democratic-leaning House seats and 14 Democratic-leaning Senate seats.

The citizen-led maps that we have endorsed would create 44 Democratic-leaning House seats and 15 Democratic-leaning Senate seats. These maps were created by the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission, using testimony from hundreds of Ohioans.

I ask you to consider my testimony and create maps that reflect the true representational fairness of Ohio. Furthermore, I ask you to respect Black and brown voters' votes. I pray that we are past the days of implementing district lines on the basis of a three-fifths compromise.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.